

Armory Arts District Study Group Meeting MINUTES

December 7th, 2011

In attendance:

Riverfront Lofts: Joan Hausrath; Silvia Acosta; Eric Delin; Linda Cohen

Places and Space Realty and Riverfront Lofts: Linda Dewing

Pawtucket Riverfront Commission and Riverfront Lofts: Pamela Hughes

Nathanson Design: Morris Nathanson and Phyllis Nathanson

Blackstone Pawtucket, LLC: Mark House, Kristin Muller, Chance Kelly

Gamm Theatre: Sally Strachan, Don Keel, Brian Platt, Jessica Ann Weinstein, Yvonne Seggerman

City of Pawtucket: Barney Heath

Gretchen Dow Simpson

Foundry Artists, Inc. Judy Miller

Pawtucket Armory Arts Center, LLC: Debra Whitehouse

Pawtucket Foundation: Thomas Mann

Meeting commenced at 11:04

1. Welcome and introductions Yvonne Seggerman, Chair

- Review and approved minutes of the last meeting, November 2.**
- Keep boundaries as they are now.**
- Yvonne Seggerman wants businesses in the district to take advantage of government/state internships; some internships specifically geared toward students with math skills, government and**

PR interest. Susie Schutt, internship coordinator at the Gamm Theatre, can help. State internships document distributed.

2. Bike path drafts Mark House

- Issue of status on bike path - Our group will write a letter of opinion**
- 2005 design concept, review changes based on Mark's collection of our group's opinions combined with Engineers' rendering**
- We will be soliciting feedback from superintendant of schools Deborah Cylke**
- Linda Dewing – path will be used more on weekends when parking deck isn't in use**
 - o Potential opportunity for shared space?**
 - o Mark House - conceptual design wants to eliminate that opportunity and create space for each**
- We need to get clear today because if this route is not completed, the energy/time/funding could possibly be directed elsewhere.**
- Phyllis Nathanson – the more we can utilize the river and its scenery, the better. It can be a scary venture to bike down Roosevelt Avenue (trucks, industrial equipment, etc.)**
- Syliva Acosta – does funding account for the embankment behind the recycling center? It would require expensive construction.**
 - o Mark House – give and take; we can reduce costs by keeping that area of the bike path on Roosevelt Ave**
- Barney Heath – “DesignTimeCost”; generally if the design is done, the money follows in some fashion.**
- Morris Nathanson – the bike path has been discussed over 25 years.**

- **Barney Heath** - There are some security issues; the police don't want the public behind city hall where prisoners come in.
- **Pam Hughes** – this is a cyclical issue; we want the path close to the river, but putting it too close to the river could bring on more problems...I don't know about others, but I bought my property in Riverfront Lofts partially because I was told there would be that bike path along the river on the opposite side.
- **Yvonne Seggerman** – Convenience, attractiveness, and easy access to the city will make this plan a reality for both commuters and for recreation - and the fewer stoplights, the better.
- **Thomas Mann** – on the issue of putting the path behind city hall: it is convenient to label it as a “security issue” but perhaps it is really about the potential loss of 10-15 parking spaces that police/city personnel do not want to give up.
 - o Same issue with Tolman teacher parking; The schools must be part of the solution; we can avoid building bridges to other disruptive/costly construction.
- **Group** creates a motion to follow our agreed upon version of the path --- from Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue – preferred route is exactly along the river all the way to the amphitheater. A possible concession to Slater Mill would be to bring the path down to the river after Slater Mill buildings, but into their parking lot. An elegant solution to be created for the amphitheater area.
 - o Motion carries unanimously (see attached map)
- **Mark House** – crossing at Roosevelt and Exchange is easier than Tolman and Exchange

- Silvia Acosta – developing near Tolman could be a catalyst for further development for awkward area behind Tolman
- Group creates a motion to follow across Exchange Street at Roosevelt Avenue and continue to follow the river, parallel to Roosevelt Avenue to the buried abutment just north of Blackstone Pawtucket, LLC – the path would cross the river on a new bridge that is built over the ruins of an old bridge. Discussion: this may be less expensive and less problematic ... regarding an elevation and various properties basis. Mark will speak to Louis Yip, who owns the property that this would encompass.

- o Motion passed unanimously (see attached map)

3. Statistics sheets – review initial graphs of job growth

- For next meeting we want to add projections/goals for 2015 and 2020. JessicaAnn will continue to work with all building owners to collect full data, including future projections.
- District statistics chart – establish FTE units for businesses with seasonal hiring patterns so we may fill out chart more thoroughly.
(attached to minutes)

4. Barney Heath, Assistant Director Department of Planning and Redevelopment; view layouts of improvements to Exchange Street; opportunity for district input

- Enhancement Project goals
 - o Safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment; slower speed of cars
 - o Add aesthetic value to Exchange St; enhance district's feel; visual enhancement

ه Brick-like edging; decorative crosswalks; add street trees; new sidewalks; handicap ramps

o On-street parking for businesses

• Challenges: \$500,000 budget; city may add some but no more from state

o Street width may be a challenge for bikers

• Timeline: plans ready by late summer 2012; build fall 2012; connection summer 2013

• Pam Hughes – can we add trees to Exchange Court?

o Phyllis Nathanson – Chris Ladds is planning to enhance that area

• Barney Heath – need permission from property owners to add trees, whether or not city controls the area

o Another complication: raised crosswalks can lead to drainage problems

o Two crosswalks – new one raised by Tolman, one by Fountain and Exchange

• Linda Cohen – how much parking is displaced?

o Yvonne Seggerman – spaces on Fountain don't exist legally, right next to the armory.

• Barney Heath – no budget for two-way Broadway; also avoid altering signals, which would be expensive

• Yvonne Seggerman – in the next few meetings, let's talk about Broadway and Exchange and come back to tree issue; keep the trees and plants in the district looking well-maintained. Maybe we could make a small task force on beautification.

5. Welcome new neighbors –Pawtucket Armory Arts Center, LLC, Debby Whitehouse, Property Manager

- Yvonne Seggerman - Chris Ladds, LLB Architecture, LLC was unavailable today because of a funeral
- Welcome Debbie Whitehouse, new landlord for the Pawtucket armory and Gamm.
- Debbie Whitehouse – Armory space will always be for the arts
 - o Drill hall “face lift” after foundry show (repair floor, etc.)
- Judy Miller, president of foundry artists – foundry artists are happy with development of Armory and want to come back
- Morris Nathanson – could we make the foundry permanent in the Armory?
 - o Judy Miller – this raises some issues: would need a year-long lease; we don’t want to add security/staffing issues; artists and the people who come for the show could not necessarily sustain a year-long permanent location in Pawtucket. The way we make money is focused on these two weeks.
- Yvonne Seggerman – The Gamm loves being in Pawtucket, love being in the armory and right now we are renewing our lease in the annex. We are optimistic and looking forward to seeing what Brian Thibeault the new owner wants to do with the Armory.
- Debbie Whitehouse – the drill hall will become a shell; usable and adaptable for different events/groups

6. Governance

- Yvonne Seggerman – looking for volunteers to help Mike Davolio

and myself create a little more structure for our group: to govern the group; possibly set up charter and bylaws; figure out who our members are; appoint officers, other than chair and secretary.

o Possible to have owners and tenants in Armory Arts District

o Debbie Whitehouse and Linda Cohen volunteer

7. Meeting Schedule

• We will meet every other month; first Wednesday at 11:30am; same location

8. Other Business

Meeting adjourned at 12:25pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Jessica Ann Weinstein.

MEETING SCHEDULE

AADSG meets every other month on the first Wednesday at 11:30 a.m.

2012:

Feb 1, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

April 4, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

June 6, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

August 1, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

October 3, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

December 5, 2012 at 11:30 a.m.

The intention is to put together a sustainable, long range plan for the arts district surrounding the Armory, and to work through details of how this neighborhood of the City of Pawtucket looks in the year 2020.

Pawtucket Armory Arts District Study Group

2000 to 2005 a 55.8% increase.

2005 to 2010 a 20.5% increase.